When he is wrapt by the radiance, the bright one no longer sees dreams.
—*Prashna Upanishad*

THEOSOPHY

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THE THEOSOPHICAL ENTERPRISE

A PARALLEL may be drawn between the record of the physical past, as found in the strata of the earth's crust, the shape and structure of mountains, and the impress of ancient waterways, and the story of human development, as told by the artifacts and overlays of cultural forms, by the institutions of society, both past and present. The section of a mountainside, when exposed, may reveal layer upon layer of some archaic beach where, century after century, have gathered the annual deposits of forms which lived and died, slowly building up a terrain which became, under transformation, first cultivated fields, then wind-swept desert, and finally no more than an inert lamination in the structure of a mountain chain.

So with many of the manners, customs, and *mores* of mankind. These are often no more than the imprint of an ancient consciousness, the measure of a lost utility, which survives only as structure and form, devoid of meaning save to those interested in the puzzles of the antiquarian. At any given moment of history, or in the life of an individual, a specimen tissue of the psycho-intellectual life can be taken which will reveal the imagery of thought in both the past and the present. Even the etymology of words and their transformations of meaning over the centuries are an indication of the continual re-embodiment of the vitality of thought. Then, in social practices, we see the passage of old ideas of value and their alteration into new significations.

One manifest symptom of change in the present is the almost total decline of ritual, for modern man. In ages past, human relations were largely governed by forms of salutation and rules of relationship which served to preserve social distance and to define the various sorts of encounter that may be experienced. Today, after some two centuries of emphasis upon the equality of all men, these once elaborate forms have very nearly all dissolved into simple formulas of recognition and greeting. This is especially so in the United States, where greetings among young and old, and between persons in all walks of life, have reached the simple uniformity of either "hello" or "hi."

The cry for a more "natural" or "organic" form of life is also a part of this general transformation. It represents a hunger for the purely human in the relationships of people, a longing for the flow of existence, instead of the finite segments established by convention and by the rules of social organization. The term *Existential,* which has suddenly come into common usage, conveys for the intellectual portion of the population the idea of the reduction of matters of importance to the essential elements of being human, there being an insistent longing in the men of our time for a clear expression of simple humanity, as distinguished from the status symbols and ulterior communications of the acquisitive society.

These developments are no doubt some of the signs of a deep change in the relationship of the psychic and manasic principles of the race. The phenomena of the change are, as would be expected, uneven in their manifestation and marked by bewildering symptoms of insecurity and feelings of dissolving identity, so that, until the strong flow of the current of the new cycle makes itself felt, they may seem to indicate breakdown more than a forward step, and weakness instead of strength. Yet even in situations where uncertainty is a major characteristic, beneath all the confusion may often be heard the low murmurings of the soul.

In relation to the Theosophical Movement, the positive aspect of the transition may be seen in the noticeable decline in reliance on authority and the increase in immediate and intuitive grasp of philosophical ideas. It is as though the soul at last has found a way of making its needs felt, and of caring less for the conventional ideas of "truth" than for individually sensed verity. It is as though an enormous burden of verbiage, believed necessary in the past, has

fallen away, and in the present there can be impersonal communication between egos, in areas once held to be difficult and obscure.

By such means, it may be, those who are truly seekers will find each other without long pilgrimage of search, and begin to form the structure of that brotherhood which may, in years to come, be the rock of salvation for hungering and suffering masses of the human race. This sort of change, perhaps, may be thought of as a transition from organized to organic human relations, retaining from the past what is still of utility, but neglecting and by-passing the formalities and niceties which belonged to a less perceptive age. The strength to sustain an order and association of this sort will have to come from direct and inward perception of principle, for it was from a lack of such insight that organizations were needed and policies and documents had to be invented to take its place.

The Direction of Psychological Activities

What really counts is the direction in which a current of psychological activity flows. In work and play, which fill most of man's waking hours, it is predominantly earth-bound, flooding the world of senses with a dazzling light which, by contrast, throws the sphere of qualitative experience into an ever-growing shadow. Consequently, intuitive perception lacks the light of conscious attention and will eventually cease to exist altogether, unless the flow of man's psychological attention is, at least at times, fully reversed. This, however, occurs only during those moments when we offer our whole being to an intangible reality without claiming any reward for ourselves. This is no simple feat, for modern man is not easily persuaded to spend any time or effort on an unprofitable venture. However, once he does become convinced of the tremendous potentialities of intuitive consciousness, his motives for reawakening it could no longer be called unselfish. All great religions, therefore, have stressed the necessity of moral development preceding or at least accompanying the quest for a higher form of intuitive awareness, to make selfish use of its gifts impossible.

—Franz Winkler

THE MYSTIC POWER OF SELF-IDEATION

ILLUSION grasps the hand of the child at an early age and leads him to the maze of human thought. Thus commences the prompting for a life's meditation. And unless a man eventually awakens to the nature of this maze, rising above it to see and understand its intricacies, all his thought-processes will be enveloped in illusion. This is Maya. It will never leave him until the after-death moment of reality enables him to see the meaning of the life just lived, and to glimpse its relation to past incarnations. Paradoxically, unless a man enters this maze to struggle to overcome its illusions, retracing his steps, marking carefully his mistakes in judgment, he would be unfitted to assume the burden of his evolutionary pilgrimage, to eventually achieve enlightenment. Omitting this struggle, his progress would parallel that of the ant which has produced a highly developed community through natural impulse. The ant can have no illusion, no desire for self aggrandizement. He works with uncanny intelligence for the good of his community and is not conscious of himself as a separate being, but remains vitally conscious of the part for which nature has equipped him in the specific social group to which he belongs.

Like the sculptor, we chisel out our ideas from the rough, and exhibit them through our actions. The mind's structure, the whole nature in fact, is based upon a group of ideas upon which our faith rests, and from which our actions flow. There are also inherent ideas which stem from the fundamentals first inculcated, when the lighting up of *manas* by higher beings awakened man to the glory of self-consciousness. And later, other hierarchies of spiritual beings incarnated in the primitive bodies, under the law of Karma, bringing with them the knowledge gained in former cycles. Thus the tree with fruit yielding a knowledge of good and evil was planted within the mind itself. It was then that self-ideation, with its mystic, creative power, began to work in and through matter to evolve more

perfect vehicles for the spiritual ego to use. And today each one is determining the nature of the forms to be used in the future. The thinking of each life-time foreshadows the nature of the psychic embryo that will become the plan for the body in a new incarnation. Ideas have power, and through them and the consequent concepts of mundane relationships, each one creates the weal or woe, although remaining unconscious of the causation.

Maya, or illusion arises from two misconceptions, the first resting upon the conviction that all we teach and see is by nature real and permanent. Matter is therefore considered the one reality contacted by the senses. Second, there is the conviction that we are our bodies and that, generally speaking, spirit is related to a state after death. Each turn in life's maze tends to confirm these beliefs and to strengthen a sense of being separate from other beings. And, as we reach the center of illusion's intricate windings, we hold dearest all that raises us above our fellow creatures, whether material possessions or mental power. But the cult of the body tends to materialize all ideas relative to the after-life; and religion similarly emphasizes this. Even the anthropomorphic deity of the Old Testament is given a personality made in the image of the human being, with traits of love and hate, anger and revenge, and even repentance for having created a faulty humanity. Thus some sections of the scriptures, written by those caught in the maze, strengthen the intensity of man's inhumanity to man by justifying cruelty as having been commanded by the deity to revenge disbelief in his omnipotence.

The Western mind is little concerned with the real or the unreal. It has become so adept in the control and use of forces, and in the shaping and use of material structures and forms that the discussion of illusion relative to the universe about us would find little if any response. Inevitably the question would be asked, What practical use could such ideas serve in our fast-moving civilization? Therefore let us remain in our illusion, if we care so to call it, for in it we have reached our high state of well being and efficiency.

Self-ideation presents two aspects: that group of mental processes which is associated with the intellect, the body, and its environment; and, on a higher plane, that which is directed toward the acquirement and use of spiritual knowledge. Thus the phrase self-ideation: ideation arising within either the lower or higher

self. Both these forms of ideation possess power, mysterious and subtle, the one creating maya, the other dispelling it by opening the inner eye of spirit. If the mind seeks the help and inspiration of the higher self, the resultant ideation will be based upon intuitional relationships. These awaken the inner sight so that the true reality, hidden within the outer forms becomes evident. Maya may then be comprehended for what it is—reality to the outer eye, *illusion to the inner sight.*

With these thoughts in mind we can better understand the words of Krishna, "I am born but through my own maya, the mystic power of self-ideation." His bodily form is taken at will, being a part of the greater illusion which he uses as his vehicle on the material plane. A karmaless being, he creates a form through the mystic power of self-ideation, consciously. It is our fate, however, that this same mystic power functions unconsciously to us, and, the resultant karma falling upon us, we can see only the functioning of a blind force. But Krishna solves many a problem when he lays the magic key at our feet. It is for us to strive to comprehend the significance of "the eternal thought in the eternal mind."

All ideas, all forms and their cyclic appearance on the material plane, emanate from the eternal mind. We are apt to think of eternity as starting at some point. In truth, eternity knows no past, present, nor future; it *is,* eternally. In its depths is contained the record of all the ideation that has ever been or will be. So-called new ideas, therefore, are but a recapturing by our finite minds of that which has always been, and their apparent newness is due, so to speak, to the fact that our knowledge is bounded by our yesterdays and the meager span of the historic period. But when, through renunciation and sacrifice, our consciousness is able to rise above the limits of the material existence, we may begin to think in the eternal. Our thinking will then parallel that which is eternal. Such thinking, universal in its essence, can accept no half-truths for its basis is the plane of spirit. It is the plane where perceptions are free from all illusion, and all mysteries may be solved. Maya will then appear as a mist rising from the hills at dawn, to be carried away by the breeze. And thereafter the spiritual sun will shed its brilliant light upon the path.

ON FIRST ACQUAINTANCE— "THE SECRET DOCTRINE"

IX

> Thus this "language" is that of *incantations* or of MANTRAS, as they are called in India, sound being *the most potent and effectual magic agent, and the first of the keys which opens the door of communication between Mortals and the Immortals.* (*The Secret Doctrine* I, 464.)

IN a certain way, everything we utter makes up the incantation of our particular life; and by this instrumentality, at least in a physical sense, we awaken and call to our help or detriment those powers responsive to our speech. We are our own nemesis or enlightener on a physical level by our voice, and we draw this paradigm or Logos of the physical from the mental-voice that we express inside ourselves—those thoughts which we invite to be inhabitants of our Mind.

A person of pure mind and careful speech can be of great help to others by just *being near*. It is an interesting phenomenon to watch the effect of such an one on others. Certainly, there is no verbal stamp of "purity." No announcements went out ahead of time making sure people were aware of this quality in regard to a man, say, such as Gandhi; yet people of all types sensed his condition and were affected by it, even people who disagreed with some of his ideas. Rev. E. Stanley Jones, for example, became an eloquent witness to the help and enlightenment Gandhi gave others simply by *being near them*. This, despite the fact that Dr. Jones and Gandhi disagreed on the relative value of missionary work.

Control or purification of the mind and the voice, however, may not be possible unless we also control the senses, for they are the channels by which our attention picks and chooses from the outer environment. If we were to consider all our senses as a sort of "ear to the environment," then what we choose to read, to hear, to eat, the companions whom we select—all these might fall into the realm of "over-all-hearing." Thus, if the body and its outer senses can be considered a complex instrument for recording sense data, we can see how its use might clarify or befog our mind-life.

While it is true that a servant of the race may be found running with thieves, still he will probably have his sensory instruments "shut" in relation to their way of life. He is there to help, not to imitate. We might suspect that a person who could resist the degrading effects of such an environment would not only be able to close his senses, but, as a counterbalance to this, would also have inner senses which have been opened—sources of nourishment and protection.

Once we begin to get some initial belief and faith in our own divinity, as well as that of all other beings—to realize that we are what we make ourselves—then we can create our environment by restraining our senses and retiring to the inside place. Thus it makes no difference whether we are among angels or devils, so long as we are identified with the source of strength.

Two persons, each trying to aid, may work in very different ways and dissimilar environments. It may be that we unravel our dharma according to our vision of effectiveness. A person convinced of the power and transcendence of the mental plane over the physical would be found in an environment quite different from that of the physical reformer. Their paths might cross incidentally, but never in the sense that their methods were the same. In addition to these two, we might find very unusual environmental conditions surrounding those persons who work on inner planes; so much so that the social reformer might accuse them of being divorced from the race.

In a historical study of ideas, it is interesting to watch their gradual emergence into the visible world. We can see how the work of mind reform is much more gradual than the physical and stretches across many generations. A fascinating example of this is the gestation, birth, and early growth of the Theosophical Society within the Theosophical Movement. First there is a single wanderer upon the planet, then there is a meeting and assimilation to an awakening force so that the potential vehicle becomes a potent one. From this point a development of the embryo in the condensed and abbreviated evolution of past forms seems to unfold, in which old efforts are quickly recapitulated as a base for the new cycle; Karma calling forth work in a new land which is more fitting to the new cycle.

In New York, in 1875, H. P. Blavatsky, William Q. Judge, and Henry S. Olcott together provided environment for the latest incarnation of the Theosophical Movement; maturity, successful or no,

may not have become possible to this ideational gathering of energy until all three of the founders died. As all nature begins with a single cell and builds its hierarchy around it, so it would seem that Movements pre-exist or gather their pattern or paradigm from a single individual. Now it would seem that this paradigmatic cell, in this case a human individual, would need to have a consciousness inclusive of any who might, by the requirements of their "karmic mission," be drawn to it. In other words, the individuals clustering around a *spiritual* cell of a movement should experience their full potential (for that cycle) by their transcendental association with the paradigm.

If there is some truth to the idea that movements aren't born until the physical casing of the paradigm dies or passes into the invisible, the Theosophical Movement, as a synthesized entity made of many individuals with *one* predominant mission, is still a child. If the approximately thirty-two years from H.P.B.'s initiation of the Movement until 1907 represent nine months of the life span for the synthetic entity, then we are young indeed! Consider what H.P.B. says about the sixth sub-race in terms of time.

How shrouded in mystery the first formation of a "working pattern" is, whether it is the working pattern for a group of Egos, for a child, a planet, or a Kosmos. In a thought somewhat kindred to this idea, H.P.B. wrote:

> On page 429 of *Isis Unveiled,* Vol. I., we said that "the mystery of first creation, which was ever the despair of Science, is unfathomable unless they (the Scientists) accept the doctrine of Hermes. *They will have to follow in the footsteps of the Hermetists.*" Our prophecy begins to assert itself.
>
> But between Hermes and Huxley there is a middle course and point. Let the men of Science only throw a bridge half-way, and think seriously over the theories of Leibnitz. (*S.D.* I, 625.)

Several times in *The Secret Doctrine,* H.P.B. intimates that Science must destroy itself, so to speak, and be reborn as a less analytical discipline; for, as she says in discussing the work of Mr. Crookes:

> The revolution produced in old chemistry by Avogadro was the first page in the Volume of *New Chemistry*. Mr. Crookes has now turned the second page, and is boldly pointing *to what may be the last.* For once *protyle* accepted and recognized—*as in-*

visible Ether was, both being logical and scientific necessities—Chemistry will have virtually ceased to live: it will reappear in its reincarnation as *New Alchemy*, or METACHEMISTRY. (*S.D.* I, 622.)

Or as John T. Merz said of Leibnitz:

> The mathematical and dynamical inquiries of Leibnitz would not have led to the same result in the mind of a purely scientific inquirer. But Leibnitz was not a scientific man in the modern sense of the word. Had he been so, he might have worked out the conception of energy, defined mathematically the ideas of force and mechanical work. . . . [But, luckily for truth—] Leibnitz was a philosopher . . . (*S.D.* I, 627.)

Even today, in making investigations about a theory of creativity, A. H. Maslow has questioned the idea that the scientist is of first rank as an example of creativity:

> I have decided for myself not to take scientific creativeness as a paradigm, but rather to use other examples. Much of the research (in theories of creativity) that is going on now deals with the creative scientists, with people who have proven themselves to be creative, Nobel prize winners, great inventors, and so on. The trouble is, if you know a lot of scientists, that you soon learn that something is wrong with this criterion because scientists as a group are not nearly as creative generally as you would expect.
>
> This includes people who have discovered, who have created actually, who have published things which were advances in human knowledge. Actually, this is not too difficult to understand. This finding tells us something about the nature of science rather than about the nature of creativeness. If I wanted to be mischievous about it, I could go so far as to define science as a technique whereby non-creative people can create. This is by no means making fun of scientists. . . . Science is a technique, social and institutionalized, whereby even unintelligent people can be useful in it. ("The Creative Attitude.")

In a sense we might say that science is predominantly a field of secondary creativity whereby the great majority build and complete the inspirations of a very few. The "ideational creator" needs to combine the qualities of a great architect and a first-class bricklayer; i.e., he needs not only the relatively unobscured intuitional faculty required for primary creation, but also an undiffused stream of WILL that can carry the gestation process to a successful conclusion.

Unfortunately, most of us are so often hypnotized by the evanescent side of ourselves that we find it difficult to see the possibilities

or requirements of ideational parentage. Thoreau described well the fate of a *physically* oriented life when he said:

> I see young men, my townsmen, whose misfortune it is to have inherited farms, houses, barns, cattle, and farming tools; for these are more easily acquired than got rid of. . . . Who made them serfs of the soil? Why should they eat their sixty acres. . . . Why should they begin digging their graves as soon as they are born? They have got to live a man's life, pushing all these things before them, and get on as well as they can. How many a poor immortal soul have I met well-nigh crushed and smothered under its load, creeping down the road of life, pushing before it a barn seventy-five feet by forty, its Augean stables never cleansed, and one hundred acres of land, tillage, mowing pasture, and wood-lot! The portionless, who struggle with no such unnecessary inherited encumbrances, find it labour enough to subdue and cultivate a few cubic feet of flesh.
>
> But men labour under a mistake. . . . By a seeming fate, commonly called necessity, they are employed, as it says in an old book, laying up treasures which moth and rust will corrupt and thieves break through and steal. It is a fool's life, as they will find when they get to the end of it, if not before. (Walden.)

The Quest for Integration

When considering our own mental reactions—termed feelings, thoughts, desires, will and so forth—it is obviously impossible to distinguish clearly between subject and object. When considering "events in the outside world," the limits of the subject and of the objects seem very clear, superficially considered. But more carefully analysed it is possible to realize that all the apparently limited "things" or "events" in the "outside world" are interconnected so intimately that it becomes consistent to claim: all "separate" things, persons or events are partial observations of a world which will be apprehended as coherent and connatural when more of our experiences are taken into account.

—Hans Christian Sandbeck

letters • questions • comment

I have a question that has been discussed many times, but this appears to be inevitable. To what extent are the writings of Theosophy "progressive"? That is, while one may grant that certain fundamental axioms remain the same in all Theosophical teachings, regardless of era, is it not also inevitable that each new presentation of Theosophy will contain elements of synthesis not present before, and applications which are "new" simply because each human being is evolving, reaching levels of subtlety in understanding not previously possible?

Perhaps the chief difficulty in formulating the elements of such a problem is that we tend to conceive of that which is "eternal" as being static. To realize that this is not the case is to discover something of the necessity for metaphysics, in which matters that are paradoxical to the intellect can be held in suspension and focused in a new sort of way for meditative reflection. In her discussion of the First Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*, Madame Blavatsky, for example, introduces a kind of "duality" in presenting the *unity* of "an omnipresent, eternal, boundless, and immutable *Principle*":

> "Be-ness" is symbolized in the Secret Doctrine under two aspects. On the one hand, absolute abstract Space, representing bare subjectivity, the one thing which no human mind can either exclude from any conception, or conceive of by itself. On the other, absolute Abstract Motion representing Unconditioned Consciousness. Even our Western thinkers have shown that Consciousness is inconceivable to us apart from change, and motion best symbolizes change, its essential characteristic. This latter aspect of the one Reality is also symbolized by the term "The Great Breath," a symbol sufficiently graphic to need no further elucidation.

The pertinence of these words to our question should be apparent, for Theosophy in its dual aspect is both eternal and changeless —and eternally new. Or, to put it in another way, Be-ness, the center from which all activity originates, is changeless in its inex-

haustible potency—and this is precisely the experience which the serious student of Theosophy encounters in his reading and study of the teachings.

It is by no means unusual for a man to respond immediately to Theosophy, study with enthusiasm and a measure of devotion for a while, and then become engulfed in professional or family responsibilities. Yet he knows that "Theosophy," considered both as a body of writings and as intuitively perceived wisdom, is there all the time. However, the Theosophy which is "there," is for this student only Theosophy externally considered. The important Theosophy for the individual is an *activity,* which manifests within his own nature when his study and devotion are resumed.

What is manifestly true for the individual is also true for cultures, religions, and psychology. A regeneration of Theosophical ideation is both a return and a progression—a progression, because the new impulse to study has had to find its way through a labyrinth of distractions; and these have had to be resolved before the luminous nature of Theosophical inspiration again emerges. The development of an intellectual climate, like the progress of an individual, is both fragmentary and cyclical, and to realize that this is so means that one has grasped the significance of the Second Fundamental of *The Secret Doctrine*. The relationship of the individual to Theosophical teachings is a peculiar one, since, also paradoxically, there is always more "Theosophy" than he can assimilate at any time and also not enough that he *can* assimilate. Those whom we consider to be great teachers have always had a difficult choice as to how much they should try to teach; and H. P. Blavatsky indicates that Gautama Buddha revealed "too little," while Jesus of Nazareth revealed "too much." This should not be taken as criticism, but rather as a suggestion of the universality of the pendulum swing of consciousness. Jesus apparently felt that essential and eternal truths could be grasped directly by the pure in heart, whereas Gautama emphasized the disciplines of a philosophical psychology, hoping that the devotee could stand on solid mental ground—always aware that he must progress through various stages to full comprehension.

In our time, certainly, the psychology of the day is not the psychology of fifty years ago, nor does either physics or biology have the same reference-points. Progress in awareness of the Theosophical point of view is clearly evident, and this progress, in turn, must

constitute a regeneration of other progressions in the past. Theosophy does not appear, now, with an unprecedented view of the soul of man, but rather reappears. In this reappearance, though, there are literally new creations of consciousness which are neither embellishments of the old nor a mere repetition. There is this pertinent passage in H. P. Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy*:

> We believe in no *creation,* but in the periodical and consecutive appearance of the universe from the subjective on to the objective plane of being, at regular intervals of time, covering periods of immense duration. In short, our Deity is the eternal, incessantly *evolving,* not *creating,* builder of the universe; that *universe itself unfolding* out of its own essence.

THE CREATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Our age has shifted all emphasis to the here and now, and thus brought about a daemonization of man and his world. The phenomenon of dictators and all the misery they have wrought springs from the fact that man has been robbed of transcendence by the shortsightedness of the super-intellectuals. Like them, he has fallen a victim to unconsciousness. But man's task is the exact opposite: to become conscious of the contents that press upward from the unconscious. Neither should he persist in his unconsciousness, nor remain identical with the unconscious elements of his being, thus evading his destiny, which is to create more and more consciousness. As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being. It may even be assumed that just as the unconscious affects us, so the increase in our consciousness affects the unconscious.

—CARL JUNG

YOUTH FORUM

At times (rather few, these days) we complete some task well, then feel an exuberant sense of satisfaction. Yet there often seems to be something ambiguous about such feelings of accomplishment. Are they positive or negative feelings—the joyous taste of fulfillment, the sense of duty done and lessons learned, or just self-indulgent ***gloating?***

No doubt reactions to success are both "higher" and "lower." The emotional mêlée of our present cycle would hardly permit us to experience purely good, or purely evil, feelings. Yet what we can do, even when being tossed up by a bubbling exhilaration or pushed down by a great despair, is to try always to *see* just what that emotional wave, now lifting us now beating at us, is really made of. Only by constant trying will we eventually be able to see; and only by seeing, eventually overcome.

In the attempt to see this particular kind of feeling, we must of course recognize the positive side of it, as the questioner has done; see what part of our joy is that deep natural pleasure of the soul at having progressed at least a little way on its journey towards emancipation. For achievement is the natural element of the soul; it is as a breath of fresh air—to the soul,—and to all other centers of consciousness. So, in a sense, by his every small accomplishment, a man gives a forward impulse to the spiritual evolution of this whole living universe. Naturally, physical evidence for such a postulate is not forthcoming, yet each of us secretly feels it is true.

But, although we must see the positive side, it is clearly not the positive side that bothers us, and so perhaps we should for the moment examine primarily the negative aspects, in the hope of dividing this devious lower nature of ours into categories. First of all, then, the feeling is to a great extent a separative one, often one that comes from comparing our own accomplishments with those of others, one usually born from that childish sense of competition which our civilization has not so far outgrown. Yet, apart from the long-range

damage which this self-glorification does to the sensitive tissue of our morality, it has an immediate effect as well, a crippling effect on any further action; for however mightily this giddy feeling lifts us up, it is essentially akin to the force of inertia. Get a man to walk a tightrope, and when he gets halfway across tell him how marvellous he is, how amazingly talented to have gotten so far—then see how long he keeps his balance!

For life *is* a tightrope, and we compromise our destiny if we think it is anything less harrowing. We are given a starting shove at birth, and then it is up to us. We have to keep a close watch all the time to be sure we are honestly centered in reality, trying at all events not to make the most obvious mistakes, yet realizing at the same time that it is sometimes easier to keep a steady balance by going boldly forward than by trying to stand still. To keep a close watch, that's the main thing, and to feel our way along, sometimes steadied by the faith of others in us, sometimes giving strength to those others by our words or by a hand reached out to them when they are faltering.

What our self-indulgent feelings really represent, it seems, are attempts by our lower nature to deceive the higher (and itself); to convince it that each minor accomplishment is a major one, and the perfect occasion for taking a rest. It is in this sense particularly that our self-congratulatory feelings are related to the force of inertia; for with every little advance we make, the mercenary armies of personality are immediately ready to drop their weapons and change themselves into a welcoming committee, warmly assuring us we have won the whole fight and recaptured all the "cities of the interior." But if we allow ourselves to be so deceived, we will surely fall; for we have forgotten where we are and where we should be going—forgotten to keep a close watch.

For, however difficult it is to keep our mind and emotions in hand, we may question whether there is ever any real excuse for falling. Falling is not the same as wobbling somewhat while we are trying to get our feet set right; falling is inertia, it is not trying again. And if we followed our lower self's lead, we would see how soon that self-satisfaction can turn into self-despisal.

DUAL PERIODICITY

> No devotee, O son of Pritha, who knoweth these two paths is ever deluded; wherefore, O Arjuna, at all times be thou fixed in devotion.
>
> *The Bhagavad-Gita*

SIR Charles Lyell tells us: "Respecting the cosmogony of the Egyptian priests, we gather much information from writers of the Grecian sects, who borrowed almost all of their tenets from Egypt, and amongst others that of the former successive destructions and renovations of the world. (*Continental,* not cosmic, catastrophes.) We learn from Plutarch that this was the theme of one of the hymns of Orpheus, so celebrated in the fabulous ages of Greece. It was brought by him from the banks of the Nile; and we even find in his verses, as in the Indian systems, a definite period assigned for the duration of every successive World.

"The returns of the great catastrophes were determined by the present period of the Magnus Annus, or great year—a cycle composed of the revolutions of the sun, moon, and planets, and terminating when these return together to the sign whence they were supposed at some remote epoch to set out. We learn particularly from the *Timaeus* of Plato that the Egyptians believed the world to be subject to occasional conflagrations and deluges. The sect of the Stoics adopted most fully the system of catastrophes destined at intervals to destroy the world. These, they taught, were of two kinds—the cataclysm, *or destruction by water,* and the *Ecpyrosis, or destruction by fire* (submarine volcanoes). From the Egyptians they derived the doctrine of the gradual debasement of man from a state of innocence" (nascent simplicity of the first sub-races of each Root Race).

Isis Unveiled teaches that Eternity is pointed off into grand cycles, in each of which twelve transformations of our world occur, following its partial destruction by *fire and water* alternately. So that when

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NOTE.—A students' collation from Theosophical works.

a minor period sets in, the earth is so changed, even geologically, as to be practically a new world. Of these twelve transformations, the earth after each of the first six is grosser, and everything on it—man included—more material, than after the preceding one. While after each of the remaining six the contrary is true, both earth and man growing more and more refined and spiritual with each terrestrial change.

When the apex of the cycle is reached, a gradual dissolution takes place, and every living objective form is destroyed. But when that point is reached humanity has become fitted to live subjectively as well as objectively. And not humanity alone, but also animals, plants, and every atom. After a time of rest, say the Buddhists, when a new world becomes self-formed, the astral souls of animals, and of all beings, except such as have reached the highest Nirvana, will return to earth to end their cycle of transformations, and become men in their turn. This stupendous conception the ancients synthesized for the instruction of the common people into a single pictorial design—the Zodiac, or celestial belt.

In earlier cycles, however, less was revealed. From the Egyptians down to the Jews it was held as the highest sin to divulge anything pertaining to the correct measure of time. It was for divulging *the secrets of the Gods,* that Tantalus was plunged into the infernal regions; the keepers of the sacred Sibylline Books were threatened with the death penalty for revealing a work from them. Sigalions (images of Harpocrates) were in every temple—especially in those of Isis and Serapis—each pressing a finger to the lips; while the Hebrews taught that to divulge, after initiation into the Rabbinical mysteries, the secrets of the Kabala, was like eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge: it was punishable by death. And yet, we Europeans accepted the *exoteric* chronology of the Jews! What wonder it has influenced and coloured ever since all our conceptions of science and the duration of things!

But let one, well acquainted with astronomy and mathematics, throw a retrospective glance into the twilight and shadows of the Past. Let him observe, take notes of what he knows of the history of the peoples and nations, and collate their respective rises and falls with what is known of astronomical cycles—especially with the *Sidereal year,* equal to 25,868 of our solar years. If the observer is gifted with the faintest intuition, then will he find how the weal and

woe of nations is intimately connected with the beginning and close of this sidereal cycle. True, the non-occultist has the disadvantage that he has no such far distant times to rely upon. He knows nothing, through exact science, of what took place nearly 10,000 years ago; yet he may find consolation in the knowledge or—if he so prefers—speculations on the fate of every one of the nations he knows of—about 16,000 years hence.

Our meaning is clear. Every sidereal year the tropics recede from the pole *four degrees* in each revolution from the equinoctial points, as the equator rounds through the Zodiacal constellations. Now, as every astronomer knows, at present the tropic is only twenty-three degrees and a fraction less than half a degree from the equator. Hence it has still 2½ degrees to run before the end of the Sidereal year; which gives humanity in general, and our civilized races in *particular,* a reprieve of about 16,000 years.

There are other cycles, of course, *cycles within cycles*—and this is just that which creates such a difficulty in the calculations of racial events. The circuit of the ecliptic is completed in 25,868 years. And, with regard to our Earth, it is calculated that the equinoctial point falls back 50 minutes ten seconds, annually. But there is another cycle within this one. It is said that "as the apsis goes forward to meet it at the rate of eleven minutes twenty-four seconds, annually, this would complete a revolution in 115,302 years. The approximation of the apsis is the sum of these motions, sixty-one minutes thirty-four seconds, and hence the equinox returns to the same position in relation to the apsis in 25,868 years." We have mentioned this cycle in *Isis* in relation to other cycles. Each has a marked influence on its contemporary race.

Millions of years, embracing such cycles, have now dropped into Lethe leaving no more recollection in the memory of the profane than the few millenniums of the orthodox Western chronology as to the origin of Man and the history of the primeval races. Add to this the fact that our present-day Orientalists and historical writers are to ancient history that which white ants are to the buildings of India. More dangerous even than those termites, the modern archaeologists —the "authorities" of the future in the matter of Universal History —are preparing for the history of past nations the fate of certain edifices in tropical countries: "History will tumble down and break into atoms in the lap of the twentieth century, devoured to its foun-

dations by her annalists," says Michelet. Very soon, indeed, under their combined efforts, it will share the fate of those ruined cities in both Americas, which lie deeply buried under impassable jungles of modern hypotheses, denials and scepticisms. But very happily *actual* history repeats herself, for she proceeds, like everything else, in cycles; and dead facts and events deliberately drowned in the sea of modern scepticism will ascend once more and reappear on the surface.

We of the present time call an age *a century*. They of Plato's day, the initiated writers at any rate, meant by a millennium, not a thousand but 100,000 years; Hindus, more independent than any, never concealed their chronology. Thus, when saying 9,000 years, the Initiates will read 900,000 years, during which space of time, i.e., from the first appearance of the Aryan race, when the Pliocene portions of the once great Atlantis began gradually sinking and other continents began to appear on the surface, down to the final disappearance of Plato's small island of Atlantis (11,000 years ago).

Plato, being an Initiate, had to use the veiled language of the Sanctuary, and so had the Magi of Chaldea and Persia, through whose exoteric revelations the Persian legends were preserved and passed to posterity. Thus one finds the Hebrews calling a week "seven days," and "a week of years" when each of its days represents 360 solar years, and the whole "week" is 2,520 years, in fact. They had a Sabbatical week, a Sabbatical year, etc., etc., and their Sabbath lasted indifferently 24 hours or 24,000 years—in their secret calculations of the Sods.

At the close of the past and the beginning of this [nineteenth] century, relying upon the purposely mutilated accounts of Hindu chronology, brought from India by certain too zealous and unscrupulous missionaries, Bailly, Dupuis, and others built quite a fantastic theory upon the subject. Because the Hindus had made half a revolution of the moon, a measure of time; and because a month composed of only fifteen days . . . is found mentioned in Hindu literature, therefore it is a verified fact that their *year* was only half a *year*, when it was not *called a day*.

The years of the Naros, being (in India) counted in two ways—either "100 years of the gods" (*divine* years), or 100 *mortal years*—one can see the tremendous difficulty for the non-initiated in com-

prehending correctly this cycle, which plays such an important part in St. John's Revelation. It is the truly apocalyptic Cycle; yet in none of the numerous speculations about it have we found anything but *a few approximate* truths, because of its being of various pre-historic events.

The Chinese divided their Zodiac into twenty-four parts, hence their year into twenty-four fortnights, but such computation did not prevent their having an astronomical year just the same as ours. And they have a period of sixty days—the Southern Indian *Roodoo,* to this day in some provinces. Moreover Diodorus Siculus . . . calls "*thirty days* an Egyptian year," or that period during which the moon performs a complete revolution. Pliny and Plutarch both speak of it; but does it stand to reason that the Egyptians, who knew astronomy as well as any other people did, made the *lunar* month consist of thirty days, when it is only twenty-eight days with fractions?

This lunary period has *an occult* meaning surely as much as the *Ayanam* [two periods of time per annum] and the *roodoo* of the Hindus had. The year of two months' duration, and the period of sixty days also, was a universal measure of time in antiquity. The Chinese, according to their own books, divided the year into six seasons, each composed of two months; in the Chinese astronomical work called *Kioo-tche,* it is said that two moons make a measure of time, and six measures a year; and to this day the aborigines of Kamchatka have their year of six months, as they had when visited by the Abbé Chappe.

It is the knowledge of the natural laws that makes of *seven* the *root* nature-number, so to say, in the manifested world—at any rate in our present terrestrial life-cycle—and the wonderful comprehension of its workings that unveiled to the ancients so many of the mysteries of nature. It is these laws, again, and their processes on the sidereal, terrestrial, and moral planes, which enabled the old astronomers to calculate correctly the duration of the cycles and their respective effects on the march of events; to record beforehand (prophecy, it is called) the influence which they will have on the course and development of the human races. The Sun, Moon, and planets being the never-erring time measurers, whose potency and periodicity were well known, became thus the great Ruler and rulers of our little system in all its *seven domains,* or "spheres of action."

The spheres of action of the combined Force of Evolution and Karma are the Super-spiritual or *Noumenal,* the Spiritual, the Psychic, the Astro-ethereal, the Sub-astral, the Vital, and the purely *physical* spheres.

The Present is the Child of the past; the Future, the begotten of the Present. There exist such things as evolutionary cycles, an eternal spiral progress into matter with a proportionate *obscuration* of spirit—though the two are one—followed by an inverse ascent into spirit and the defeat of matter, active and passive by turns. *Pralaya* is not a term that applies *only* to every "Night of Brahma," or the world's dissolution following every Manvantara, equal to 71 Mahayugas. It applies also to each "obscuration" as well, and even to every Cataclysm that puts an end, by fire and water in turn, to each Root-Race. Pralaya is a term like that of "Manu"—the generic name for the *Sishtas,* who, under the appellation of "King," are shown in the Puranas as preserver "with the seed of all things in an ark from the waters of that flood" (or the fire of a general volcanic conflagration, the commencement of which we already see for our Fifth-Race in the terrible earthquakes and eruptions of these late years, and especially in the present one [1888?]) . . . which in the season of a pralaya overspreads the world" (the Earth).

We are only in the Fourth Round, and it is in the Fifth that the full development of *Manas,* as a direct ray from the Universal MAHAT —a ray unimpeded by matter—will be finally reached. Nevertheless, as every sub-race and nation have their cycles and stages of developmental evolution repeated on a smaller scale, it must be the more so in the case of a Root-Race. Our race then has, as a Root-race, crossed the equatorial line and is cycling on the Spiritual side; but some of our sub-races still find themselves on the shadowy descending arc of their respective national cycles; while others again —the oldest—having crossed their crucial point, which alone decides whether a race, a nation, or a tribe will live or perish, are at the apex of spiritual development as sub-races.

on the lookout

"God" and America

An excellent article in the *Humanist* (September-October, 1963) should serve to clarify the perennial Theosophical objection to definition of the United States as "a Christian country." The joint authors, Sherman Wakefield and Lester Forest, have pooled references under the title, "God and the Declaration of Independence," and their treatment is particularly informative in respect to the differences between the theist God of the Christians and the deist God of the Founding Fathers.

The current focal point of persistent debate is the New York Regents' Prayer case cited by the Supreme Court in 1962 which forbade the recitation of a state-composed prayer in the public schools of New York State. Wakefield and Forest speak of the aftermath:

> A general cry arose that "God" was now to be excluded from the public schools. Several bills were introduced in Congress proposing to amend the United States Constitution to permit prayers in the public schools. Prior to this decision and since then, statements have been made that this is a religious nation, a Christian nation, and that "God" is mentioned even in the Declaration of Independence.
>
> To say "this is a religious nation" or that "we are a religious people" is plausible sounding language which a sectarian believer in the Judeo-Christian concept of God uses, but it neither creates nor extends a monopoly of belief to any one religious system.

Who and What is God?

Wakefield and Forest continue:

> To say "God" is mentioned even in the Declaration of Independence, requires some closer analysis and in depth. The popular assumption is that the "God" in the Declaration is the *Christian* God. But such an attitude can be taken only by those who do not know—or if they know, choose to ignore—the history of religion and early American history. Not only do religions other than Christianity believe in some god or gods, but the anti-Christian Deists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries particularly believed in a God, and it was the Deists' God in whom

the Founding Fathers believed and about whom they wrote in the Declaration of Independence. Therefore, it is important to look into the nature of this God and decide whether or not it was the *Christian* God.

The deistic God was the God of Nature or Nature's God, not the theistic God of Christianity.

Deism arose in England in the seventeenth century and spread to France in the eighteenth century where it was developed and liberalized. By the eighteenth century Nature had intervened between God and man, and in this stage deistic ideas were brought to America before the American Revolution. With Thomas Paine, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and others as deists, it is no surprise that much of this philosophy was worked into the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Paine, for many years called an atheist and only recently acknowledged as "Godfather of America" and admitted to the Hall of Fame, was a Deist. George Washington, "Father of his Country," recently has been proved to have been a Deist, although more restrained in his remarks than Paine and Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration, was a Deist and yet he was willing to question even the existence of a God. In a long letter (August 10, 1787) to Peter Carr, one of his favorite nephews, he wrote: "Question with boldness even the existence of a god."

This is the background and philosophy of the times when the Declaration was written.

The Key Concept of "Providence"

Wakefield and Forest demonstrate, with effective references, that phrases occurring in the Declaration of Independence containing the words "Nature's God," "Creator," and "Divine Providence," all must be read in philosophical context:

"Nature's God" and "Creator" are referrals to the God of Deism not to the God of Christianity. The only other referral to god is near the Declaration's end: ". . . with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor."

Here too it is a Deist's concept of "Providence." The *Encyclopedia of Religion,* in its article on "Providence" says: "The doctrine of providence is a phase of Christian theism. It is to be distinguished from Deism . . ." The distinguishing element is that most of the Deists believed in general Providence, which means that when God made the world he imbued it with a general moral solicitude for man, but that he does not give a continuing and personal attention to human details. The deistic general Providence is not the Christian theistic special providence

which looks to God's assistance to individuals in the ordering of their lives. Therefore, the deist reference to Providence is not what is understood by the word "Providence" today.

After the foregoing analysis it is now abundantly clear that references to "Nature's God," "Creator" and "Providence" in the Declaration of Independence of 1776 were not to the Christian God but to the deistic God. After the American Revolution deistic views became popular even the word "God" was omitted from the Constitution of the United States. Then, as was pointed out earlier in this analysis, the Treaty with Tripoli (1797) specifically denied the foundation of the United States on Christianity.

A Challenge of Philosophy

Wakefield and Forest conclude by pointing up an issue which is both contemporary and perennial:

In the search for guidance from our Founding Fathers it is wise to look to their own words and thoughts as they used them and understood them, and draw from those words the guidance we sorely need in the Church-State matters before us today. It is interesting to note that thirteen years before Jefferson "erected" his "wall of separation" between church and state, George Washington in a letter to the General Committee representing the United Baptist Churches in Virginia, wanted to erect "effectual barriers against the horrors of spiritual tyranny."

Some Misconceptions of ULT

While THEOSOPHY is an independent journal, in the sense that it is not concerned with Theosophical organizations, but with the teachings and philosophy of Theosophy, it nonetheless came into being through the work and the methods of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Accordingly, it has an obligation to take notice of mistaken impressions of ULT, when they arise. A case of this sort came into evidence in some material printed in the October issue of the mimeographed monthly, *Theosophists: Reunite!*. During a recent world tour, Mr. Sri Ram, International President of the Theosophical Society, had occasion in Vienna to speak to T.S. members there about groups not affiliated with the T.S. A portion of these remarks, relating to ULT, were reported in the European T.S. journal, *Theosophy in Action,* and reprinted in *Theosophists: Reunite!,* where they came to the attention of the editors of THEOSOPHY.

Among the comments attributed by *Theosophy in Action* to Mr. Sri Ram was the statement that ULT had a "leader." He was further quoted as saying:

> They [the ULT] have no lists of members, and no subscriptions are collected. They have no elections. A small body, organized like a trading company, owns all their property, and this is administered by about seven people, who also decide who is to conduct their meetings. People conduct their meetings only if this leading committee is certain that they will adhere to their polity. Nobody else may speak.

Although the editor of *Theosophy in Action* noted that these remarks were on the basis of recollection and had not been checked by Mr. Sri Ram, it was apparent that some erroneous impressions might result, and correction seemed necessary.

A Reply on Behalf of ULT

One letter to Sri Ram, written in the interest of clarification, reads in part:

> Mr. Sri Ram, President
> The Theosophical Society
> International Headquarters
> Adyar, Madras, India
>
> Dear Sri Ram:
>
> Mr. F. Pierce Spinks' mimeographed paper for October includes quotations from the European *Theosophy in Action* which purport to represent your conversation with European Theosophists in Vienna during your world tour, on the subject of the United Lodge of Theosophists.
>
> You are probably aware of this rendition, though it is possible that you have not seen it, and it seems to us also quite likely that it is not accurate in phrasing. If, on the other hand, *Theosophy in Action* did represent your remarks properly, we must have done a poor job of explaining the manner in which ULT functions, during that pleasant meeting in Los Angeles.
>
> Just for the record: The Theosophy Company was organized for the purpose of obtaining a tax exemption certificate which would enable a non-profit organization to engage in the work of distributing Theosophical literature. The trustees of Theosophy Company serve as such without any remuneration and function solely as custodians of the publishing work and of any donations or bequests which are given to support it and the maintenance of a building where the work can go on. These trustees have nothing whatsoever to do with decisions as to who is to conduct the meetings, although an individual or individuals who are trustees may also participate in the meetings and express their thoughts as to the selection of chairmen for study classes, new lecturers to augment the number of present lecturers, etc. At the present time, two of the trustees reside in New York City, and

there, similarly, their connection with the public meetings of ULT and Theosophy School, when such connection exists, is functionally coincidental. Actually, decisions of the sort referred to in the misleading quote are arrived at by informal discussion in conference, and the chairman of a study group may, for example, suggest that a promising student be given a lecture assignment, or he may suggest one or more other chairmen to replace him at the end of his chairmanship.

It is not even necessary for one who speaks from the ULT platform to be a member of ULT, as is illustrated at present by one young woman of unquestioned ability who has been on our platform for some years now, although she is disinclined to perform even the small formality of signing a membership card. When the late Col. Thompson of the Canadian section of the T.S. was in Los Angeles, he was invited to speak on the ULT platform by the simplest of all arrangements—the one who was to have spoken that evening simply invited Col. Thompson to take his place.

We do not know whether this communication, which aims at clarification, is actually necessary for your own understanding, but it is possible that it should be published both by *Theosophy in Action* and by *Theosophists: Reunite!*

Very truly yours,
Editors, THEOSOPHY

A Constructive Reply

Some paragraphs in the response to this letter from Mr. Sri Ram are clear evidence that none of his conversation respecting the United Lodge of Theosophists was intended to belittle ULT or presumed to be a full characterization of it:

I have your letter of October 22nd. I am very sorry that Mr. Pierce Spinks has included in his mimeographed paper for October the unrevised paragraph which appeared in *Theosophy in Action,* purporting to report certain observations by me, said to have been made in Vienna. I had not seen either the report in *Theosophy in Action* or the mimeographed paper issued by Mr. Pierce Spinks. Nor do I remember the occasion in Vienna in which I referred to the constitution of the United Lodge of Theosophists and the way in which it works.

In the course of my tours in many places, the question of amalgamating the different Theosophical bodies is brought up, and I have had occasion to explain why such an amalgamation is not feasible, and that turns upon the difference between the constitution of the United Lodge of Theosophists and the constitution of the Adyar Theosophical Society. But I am all in favor

of friendly co-operation between them. My remarks on these occasions have been generally based on the information I obtained from you at the meeting in Los Angeles. I have tried to be accurate in the stating of facts. I certainly do not like any report of my remarks to appear, without my being shown that report beforehand.

I am very sorry that this paragraph has appeared in its unrevised form, and I agree with you that it is unfortunate. I thank you for your explanation of the way in which The Theosophy Company is organized. I will send it to the Editor of *Theosophy in Action* to be printed in that journal, and that would dispel any wrong impression that has been formed.

You may take it from me that I would not speak of the United Lodge of Theosophists, and could not have spoken of it, in any terms that are derogatory or have said anything to prejudice the minds of people against it.

Another Point in Passing

This communication makes clear that both *Theosophy in Action* and *Theosophists: Reunite!* have been invited to print relevant portions of the letter in explanation of ULT to which Sri Ram refers. It was also necessary for it to be understood that no particular person has ever been regarded as the "head" of ULT or its "leader." In clarification of this point, an editor of THEOSOPHY wrote to Mr. Sri Ram as follows:

The reason this seems an important point to ULT people is that, while any individual may attain recognition as someone whose word carries great weight in counseling, there is no mechanism in the conduct of ULT by which such words can be enforced. Many people, indeed, *have* solicited advice from a particular person or persons and have followed it when given, but also a good number have not followed such suggestions but have proceeded individually or in autonomous groups to disregard them.

"Brain, not Organs, Sees and Hears"

This is the heading of a Los Angeles *Times* column (July 19, 1963) by Harry Nelson, medical editor. While this statement may be accepted by many people and by all Theosophists (who have the additional teaching of the astral brain and *its* potentialities), its emphasis, and subsequent proof, in the *Times* will reach a much wider public. Mr. Nelson begins:

Although it never occurs to most of us, we actually see and hear with our brain, not with our eyes or ears.

Startling proof of this has been provided by electrical stimulation of certain areas in a patient's brain. It produces images and sounds which actually were hallucinations.

Dr. Wilder Penfield, a Canadian neurosurgeon, took advantage of an operation in which the patient was undergoing brain surgery to conduct the experiment. The patient was fully conscious, since the absence of pain-registering nerves in the brain makes anesthesia unnecessary once the scalp has been penetrated.

Asked what she felt as the surgeon stimulated various areas of the brain with an electrode, the patient reported vivid images and sounds. At one point she had the hallucination she was in her kitchen and could hear and see children talking and playing.

Daydreams and Hallucinations

Mr. Nelson then takes up the subject of hallucination:

Scientists say that everybody dreams and everybody hallucinates. But while an individual is willing to admit that he dreams, it is usually difficult for him to accept the fact that a certain experience has been a hallucination. Why the difference, when in each case it can be shown the objects seen are not physically present?

One reason is that most people associate hallucinations with the abnormal. We tend to believe—unjustifiably, some scientists say—that hallucinations indicate something is wrong mentally, and we do not wish to acquire that stigma.

Another more basic reason is that hallucinations occur during the waking state, and we have grown accustomed to considering as incontrovertible a sensory experience which takes place when we are awake. . . . Daydreams, however, are a good illustration that perfectly normal persons hallucinate.

An Attempt to Map the Brain Territory

According to Mr. Nelson, Drs. Arnold and Madge Scheibel, of UCLA's Brain Research Institute, "have undertaken the complicated job of mapping the circuitry of the part of the brain believed to be involved with hallucinations." The account proceeds:

The brain researchers want to know what happens in the brain's circuitry when sensory information from the real world is shut off and the internally generated sensory experience of hallucination is allowed to take over.

Dr. Scheibel, who is a psychiatrist, said his experience in dealing with psychotic patients convinced him that nerve physiology must be as important as traditional psychiatric factors in explaining hallucinations. "Regardless of the patient's back-

ground," he said, "the hallucinations of the psychotic have a striking similarity."

Basis of a Speculative Theory

The area the Scheibels are exploring is called the "reticular activating system," which controls activities associated with the waking state. Combining speculation with knowledge, the article concludes:

> The cells of the reticular activating system are very long and as they pass through various levels of the brain responsible for controlling a variety of functions, they make millions of contacts.
>
> These contacts constitute a fine balance between information coming into the brain from the outside world and that already present in the brain as stored information.
>
> The Scheibels speculate that in the psychotic the contacts have become biased toward the later type information, and the balance which is present in normal persons becomes upset. This is the same situation which exists when a person dreams—the input from the outside world is shut out and the brain switches to its stored information which becomes the subject matter of the dreaming.

All this talk of areas, levels, circuitry, and reticular systems brings to mind what H. P. Blavatsky wrote in *Transactions* (p. 64): "The brain is such a complex thing, both physically and metaphysically, that it is like a tree whose bark you can remove layer by layer, each layer being different from all the others, and each having its own special work, function, and properties."

Soviet Interest in Brain-mind Phenomena

According to an account in the Chicago *Tribune* (June 9, 1963) leading Soviet scientists are exceedingly interested in all up-to-date research being done in the United States—particularly developments in cybernetics (the computer-machine approach to brain research), bionics (study of the analogy between living and mechanical systems), cooperation between the medical and other branches of science, and all other brain-mind research. Further, Soviet scientists accept as "challenges" such questions as: Can a space-ship be guided by telepathy? Can submarine commanders and astronauts operate via long-distance telepathy? The article continues:

> Prof. Leonid Vasiliev, head of Leningrad university's physiology department, experiments in long-distance telepathy—

which he prefers to call "long-distance suggestion," "non-verbal suggestion" or "biological radio communication." His chief research tool for studying the physiological mechanisms of telepathy is hypnosis, combined with various electronic devices to register electro-physiological changes in the brain.

The Russians go in big for hypnosis. At the burn treatment center here they combine hypnosis with electronics in a form of "electric sleep" to treat patients suffering from both burns and psychosomatic ailments.

Long-distance Hypnosis

Although Vasiliev has also used hallucinogen drugs, such as peyote, and various others which are supposed to either stimulate or suppress telepathic perception, his chief interest at present is in long-distance hypnosis. For example:

Vasiliev claims to have mastered long ago the techniques of verbal suggestion in hypnosis. . . . No longer need he say aloud to the subject: "Go to sleep. . . . Now you are asleep." He merely *thinks* or wills the subject into a hypnotic trance. And he can do it from a distance with the subject in another room or even in a distant city.

The importance of these experiments, some scientists believe, is not in demonstrating hypnosis as a scientific fact—this is generally accepted—but in showing that hypnosis can be mere mental suggestion.

Vasiliev has found that subjects under hypnosis can perceive persons, movements, and objects in another room, and pick up visual images projected by the hypnologist thru non-verbal suggestion. He is convinced that *information*—he stresses the word—at least in the form of images and ideas, can be communicated from one human mind to another by biological rapport.

One Startling Result of Hypnosis

Theosophists are likely to view with alarm the possibilities of infringing on another's will which are inherent in this sort of experiment. By contrast, the general emphasis on hypnosis as an additional "tool" for doctors, generally prevalent in the United States, seems almost innocuous. On the other hand, all the warnings by physicians about the danger of hypnosis in the hands of "unqualified" persons have failed to prevent its misuse as a means of entertainment. A special report from Elizabethton, Tenn., to *Newsday* (Oct. 4, 1963) relates:

A snake has pursued 13-year-old Terry Fletcher for four days now. It slid from her subconscious and became reality in

her mind's eye on Tuesday when an amateur magician hypnotized her during an assembly at the Unaka High School. Yesterday morning, it followed her as she ran screaming down a hospital corridor.

Terry's mother related the story of what happened afterwards as it had been told to her:

"The kids started marching out. One little girl who had been hypnotized said she couldn't open her eyes. The principal took her into the 'home ec' room and talked her out of it." Then Terry and a friend, who also had been hypnotized, went into a washroom to get rid of the flour [used in the hypnotic demonstration] on their faces. Suddenly, Terry turned to Linda and said: "I feel dizzy." She fell unconscious to the floor.

Teachers and Linda brought Terry to her uncle's house. There, she became hysterical and the rescue squad was called to take her to the hospital. "It took four rescue squad men and a deputy sheriff to hold her down," Mrs. Fletcher said.

Conflicting Opinions

The account concludes:

Cunningham [who hypnotized Terry] said it is a "scandalism" the way some people have been talking about the incident. "Hypnosis is all right," he said. "Sometimes, a person gets to thinking about how she was hypnotized and goes and hypnotizes herself."

But in New York, Dr. Hyman Barahal, acting director of Pilgrim State Hospital, said: "Hypnosis is very dangerous. I myself know of several cases where psychosis was precipitated where there were no tendencies before." He said hypnosis should be practiced only by qualified persons and that he would be in favor of a state law to that effect. "It can be horrible," he said. "Certainly, the use of it by the unqualified on children is doubly bad. Children are more susceptible, more gullible."